

and above all to gather what he will himself think of the book—what is it like? shall I like it?—not what some reviewer thinks. It follows that to him an inch of quotation is usually worth an ell of opinion. But the race of reviewers seems afflicted with a morbid conscientiousness (at least, that is the most charitable explanation) which makes them feel they are defrauding their editors and their public if they quote freely, instead of producing a complete line, all their own, for every penny paid them. The public might put up with that a good deal more philosophically than they suppose. There are periodicals one could name, where the reviewers are so anxious to have views, yet so uncertain what they are, and so nervous lest anybody else should find out, that one comes in the end to read nothing in their articles except the quotations—which, unfortunately, are the one thing they grudge. For, alas, reviewers too are human and long to mount the tripod; forgetting that we want an idea of the book in question rather than their idea of it, and to be told what it is rather than what they think it ought to be. Still, reviewing is a side-issue in criticism. We could not do without it. And the modern standard of courtesy, tolerance, and good temper among reviewers, unlike some grander critics, remains creditably high. Things are very different in this quarter from a century ago.

No less essential, again, are the literary historians and biographers, who give us facts, not feelings;

truths, not
opinions. True, they sometimes behave as if
they had
graduated at the University of Laputa.
'Pepys's illnesses⁵,
writes Mr. Ponsonby in an amusing passage,
'have been
analysed by prominent physicians, a book
written about
his music, the sites of his houses searched
for, his friends
and acquaintances described, his own
relations and his
relations by marriage unearthed, his
servants' genealogies